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PH-09 PA-01 OCT-02 SSN-03 RP-10 ACDA-12 SSN-02
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R 030546Z MAY 01
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4683

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 05630

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION ISLAMABAD DATED 29 APR IS
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PESHAWAR 0266

E.O. 12065: RDS-4 1/29/01 (ARCHARD, D.B.) 0J-M

TAGS: PEPR PINS PINT MOPS SREF

SUBJECT: C - BIG REFUGEE INFLUX INTO KURRAH TRIBAL AGENCY; LOCALS
UNHAPPY

REF: A) PESHAWAR 0220; B) PESHAWAR 0248

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. A TURI (SHIU PATHUN) TRIBESMAN AND LANGONNER FROM THE
MNPP'S KURRAH TRIBAL AGENCY SAYS THAT THERE WAS INDEED A MASSIVE
RECENT INFLUX OF AFGHAN REFUGEES FROM THE NEARBY KHOST AREA IN
PAKTIA PROVINCE. US REPORTED IN THE PAKISTANI PRESS. THE ARRIVAL
OF THE AFGHANS, PRIMARILY SABGI PATHANS WITH A FEN HINDU
"BASAARIST", HAS CONSIDERABLY HEIGHTENED LOCAL ANXIETIES CON-
CERNING THE REFUGEE PRESENCE, ACCORDING TO SOURCE. HE IS A
MAN WHOSE VILLAGE IS IN THE CENTER OF LAND ON WHICH THE AFGHANS
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HAVE SETTLED AND WHO PERSONALLY KNOWS ODD SABGIS AND THEIR LEAD-

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EN. SOURCE SAID THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES INVOLVED, WHILE MORE THAN LARGE ENOUGH TO SEVERELY STRAIN LOCAL RESOURCES AND HOSPITALITY, IS PROBABLY CLOSER TO 10,000 FAMILIES THAN THE 20,000 REPORTED IN THE PRESS.

3. THE TURI KHAN TOLD VICE CONSUL PHIL COVINGTON APRIL 20 THAT THE GROUP FROM KHOWST HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY PUSHED OFF THEIR LAND AND INTO PAKISTAN BY DRA FORCES. AN AFGHAN GENERAL HAD TOLD THEIR LEADER, HAROON ALI JAM, A FORMER MP UNDER ZAMIR SHAH, THAT HE AND HIS TRIBE WERE "NOT WANTED". TO DRIVE THE POINT THROGH SOME OF THEIR VILLAGES AROUND KHOWST HAD BEEN BOMBED, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE SABRIS HAD DONE NOTHING AS A GROUP TO OPPOSE THE KARNAL REGIME. IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS AND ALSO BECAUSE THEY HAD SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF ANTI-DRA ELEMENTS, WHO THEY CLAIMED ROBBED THEM, THAT THE SABRI TRIBE DECIDED TO SEEK REFUGE IN KURRAH.

4. WITHIN THE AGENCY, THEY ARE NOW SETTLED BY THEMSELVES IN A NUMBER OF NEWLY-FORMED CAMPS ALONG THE WEST BANK OF THE KURRAH RIVER BETWEEN THE VILLAGES OF TANGAI AND ALIZAI. THIS IS LAND OWNED PRIMARILY BY MEMBERS OF THE ALWAYS-VOCAL TURI TRIBE.

5. SOURCE TOLD COVINGTON THAT, EVEN BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THIS LATEST WAVE OF AFGHANS INTO THE TROUBLED KURRAH AGENCY (SEE REPTL A), LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE REFUGEES HAD CHANGED FROM SYMPATHY AND PATIENCE TO FEAR AND REGRETMENT. HE CITED THREE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS REVERSAL:

6. FIRST, THE SQUATTERS HAVE IMPOSED AN INCREASING BURDEN ON ALREADY SCARCE RESOURCES. MUCH OF THE LAND ON WHICH THEY HAVE SETTLED OR BEEN SETTLED WAS AT LEAST POTENTIALLY AGRICULTURAL. THEIR SHEEP AND CATTLE HAVE GRAZED BARE LARGE AREAS BEYOND
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THEIR SETTLEMENTS, TO THE POINT THAT MANY LOCAL FARMERS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SELL ALL OR SOME OF THEIR STOCK.

7. SECOND, THE REFUGEES ARE INCREASINGLY SEEN AS A SECURITY THREAT. THOUGH THERE HAVE NOT, AS YET, BEEN MANY INCIDENTS INVOLVING CRIMES AGAINST LOCALS, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE VIOLENT SCIFFE AMONG THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES, AND IT IS FEARED THAT THIS WILL SPILL OVER. ALSO, "HOST" OF THE GUNS AND OTHER WEAPONS WHICH THE MUJAHIDEEN OBTAIN ON JIHAD ARE SOLD IN KURRAH - OFTEN TO "UNRELIABLE ELEMENTS".

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8. THIRD, LOCAL PEOPLE INCREASINGLY SEE THE AFGHANS AS HAVING COME TO THEIR COUNTRY FOR FREE LAND AND HANDOUTS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE. SOURCE POINTED OUT THAT LEADER OF SABRI REFUGEE GROUP REFERRED TO SHELTER AND OTHER RELIEF PROVIDED BY GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN, WHEREAS "IT'S OUR LAND AND OUR TAXES, NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 00630

9. AS HOSTILITY TOWARDS REFUGEES WAXES, SOURCE SAID, LOCAL
SUPPORT FOR GOP POLICY OF WELCOME AND RELIEF EFFORT WAXES.

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10. COMMENT: KURRAH TRIBAL AGENCY IS CLEARLY THE GOP'S WORST
PROBLEM AREA IN THE NWFP IN TERMS OF LOCAL/REFUGEE RELATIONS.
IF REGISTRATION FIGURES ARE ACCURATE, REFUGEES THERE NOW OUT-
NUMBER PAKISTANIS. MOREOVER, THERE IS A PROPORTIONALLY HIGHER
CONCENTRATION OF SHIA MUSLIMS (PRIMARILY TURKIS) IN KURRAH THAN
IN ANY OF THE PROVINCE'S OTHER AGENCIES OR DISTRICTS. AS WE
HAVE BEEN REPORTING SINCE LAST FALL, SHIA ANTI-PATHY TOWARDS THE
OVERWHELMINGLY SUNNI REFUGEE POPULATION IS ANOTHER POTENTIAL
CAUSE OF FRICTION IN AREAS LIKE KURRAH AND D.I. KHAN WITH LARGE
SHIA COMMUNITIES. FINALLY, BECAUSE OF ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION AS
A SALIENT THROUSTING DEEP INTO AFGHANISTAN TO WITHIN FIFTY-FIVE
MILES OF KABUL, KURRAH IS AN IMPORTANT STAGING AREA FOR THE
AFGHAN JIHAD. HENCE, OF COURSE, IT HAS MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF
ASSERTIVELY ARMED ALIENS - ANOTHER GOOD REASON FOR PUBLIC
ANXIETY.

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11. COMMENT CONTINUED:

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12. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO REPORT FURTHER ON THE SASPI REFUGEE
GROUP WITHIN THE NEXT DAY OR SO. ARCHARD END OF QUOTATION HUMMEL

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